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***Natural Resources Conservation Service***

## **USDA – NRCS Conservation Programs in Oklahoma**

**Kevin Norton  
Assistant State Conservationist  
Stillwater, OK**



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### **Our Mission:**

**Helping people help  
the land.**

**Our Vision:  
Productive Lands  
Healthy Environment**





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### **Topics**

- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**
  - **Who we are**
  - **What we do**
  - **How we do it**
- **Conservation Program Opportunities**



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### **NRCS – Who We Are ...**

- Federal agency under USDA
- Formerly Soil Conservation Service (SCS)
- Offices located in each of 77 counties; supported by 6 technical offices
- Technical staff: soil conservationists, range conservationists, technicians, engineers, geologists, soil scientists, biologists, agronomists



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## **The Dust Bowl Led to the Birth of NRCS**



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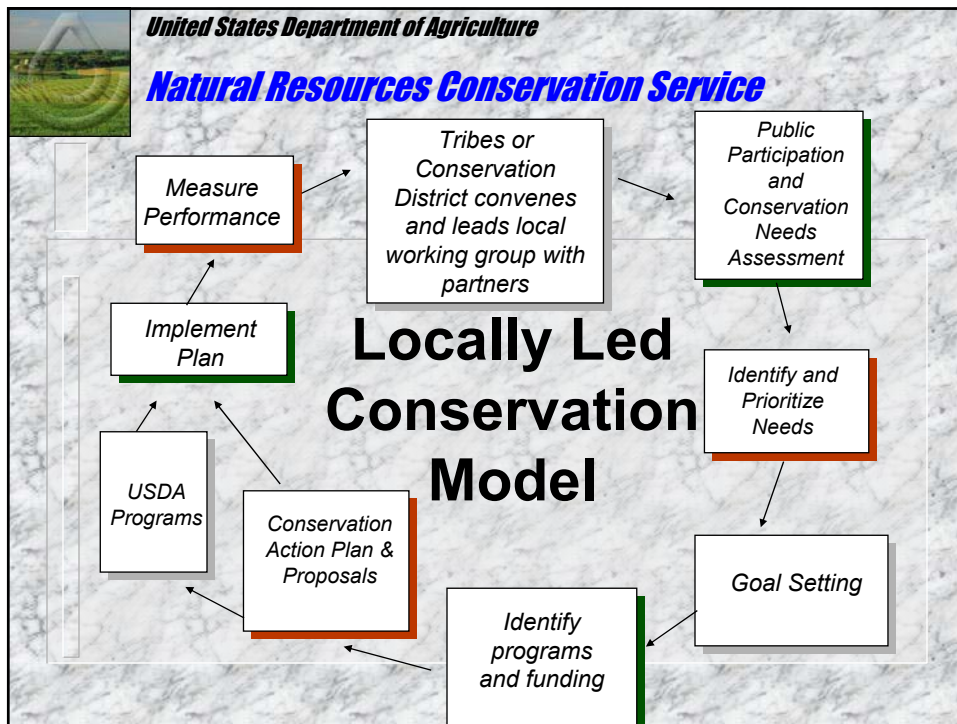
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## **NRCS – What We Do ...**


- Conservation on **private** land
- Provide **voluntary** assistance (technical & financial)
- Work in **partnership** with 88 local conservation districts







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- Natural Resource Problems or Concerns**
- **Soil tilth**
  - **Invasive plants**
  - **Water quality**
  - **Water quantity**
  - **Poor grazing**
  - **Animal health**
  - **Habitat**
  - **Air quality**
  - **Agriculture Chemicals**
  - **Nutrients fertilizers**
  - **Soil compaction**
  - **Irrigation water management**
  - **Landuse conversion**




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**Conservation Practices**

Natural Resource Problems or Concerns



**Overgrazing**


**Redcedar Invasion**



**Water development**

**Cross fencing**

**Prescribed grazing**



**Brush management**

**mechanical**

**chemical**

**biological**



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**Conservation Practices**

Natural Resource Problems or Concerns



**Grade stabilization structure (GSS)**



**Sediment Basin**

**Soil erosion**

**sheet and rill**

**gully**

**ephemeral**

**Cropland and Grasslands**



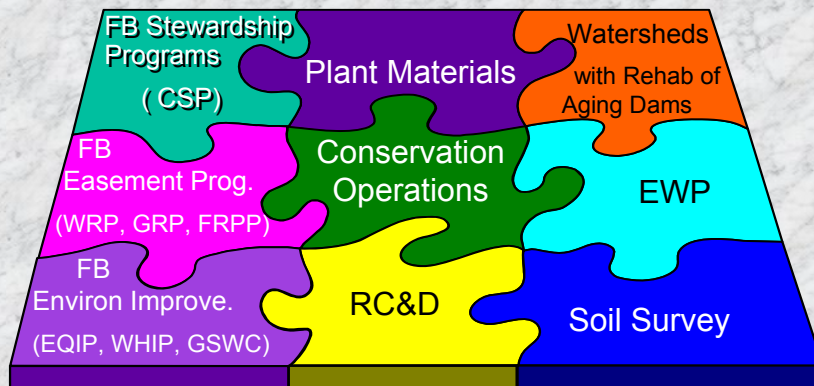
**Diversions**



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### **Programs to get Conservation on the Land**



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### **Technical Assistance Conservation Programs**

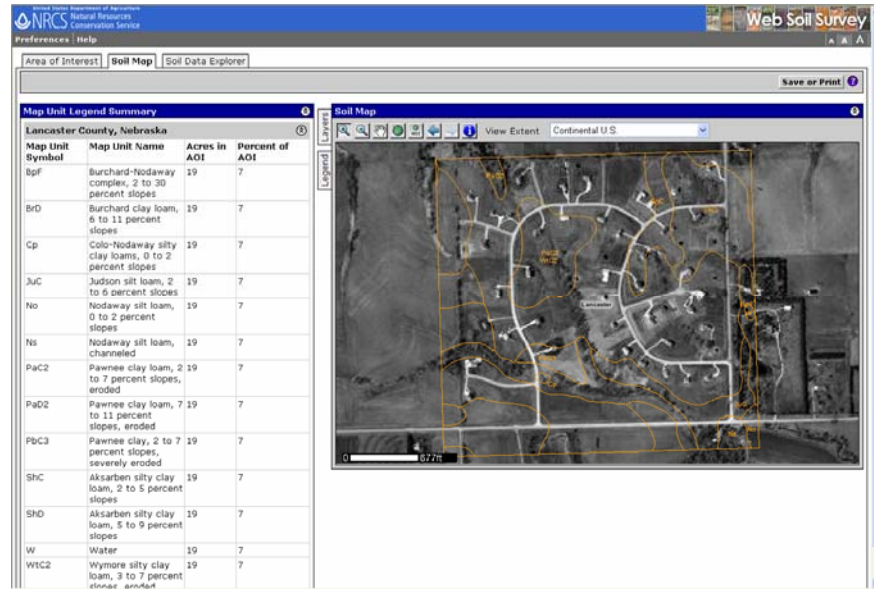
- **Conservation Technical Assistance**
- **Soil Survey**
- **Plant Materials**
- **Watershed Planning and Surveys**
- **Resource Conservation and Development**







# Soil Map







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## **Discretionary Conservation Programs**

- Conservation Technical Assistance
- Soil Survey
- Plant Materials
- Resource Conservation and Development – RC&D
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program – EWP
- Watershed and Flood Prevention
- Watershed Rehabilitation



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## **Farm Bill Conservation Programs**

- CRP – Conservation Reserve Program (FSA)
- FRPP – Farm & Ranchland Protection Program
- WHIP – Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
- GRP – Grassland Reserve Program
- CSP – Conservation Security Program
- GSWC – Ground & Surface Water Cons. Program
- WRP – Wetland Reserve Program
- EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program



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## **Working Lands Conservation Programs**

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
- **Ground and Surface Water Conservation**
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**
- **Conservation Security Program (CSP)**



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## **Conservation Programs**

Conservation programs are a tool for implementation of a producer's conservation plan

- Long-term contracts (cost-share and easements)
- Provide cost-share and incentive payments for implementation of approved conservation practices consistent with specific program objectives






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**Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP**

- Provides financial assistance (up to 75% C/S) for structural, vegetative, and management practices
- Funding pools:
  - Conservation District level
  - Local Emphasis Areas
  - Statewide Resource Concerns
- Continuous sign-up
- Evaluation of applications in Nov. & Dec.
- Selections / contract preparation in Jan. & Feb.





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**Limited Resource Farmers**

**Must Meet BOTH**

**A. Gross Farm Sales Determination:**

In each of the last two years, was your direct or indirect **Gross Farm Sales** less than or equal to \$116,800 per year?


Gross Farm Sales is defined as: Gross Income entered on IRS Form 1040, Schedule F, in the Farm Income Section.

**B. Adjusted Gross Income Determination: (Payne County)**

In each of the last two years, was your **Total Household Income** less than the Payne County "County/Area Value" of **\$19,350.00**?

Total Household Income is defined as Adjusted Gross Income for all members in your household or the amount you entered on IRS Form 1040, Adjusted Gross Income Section.

County/Area Value is calculated as the higher of the National Poverty level or 50% of the County/Area Median Household Income.



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**Beginning Farmers**

- A participant must be able to provide one Form *IRS 1040* from the last 10 years that shows they did not file a Schedule F
- All members of an entity must qualify



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## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP**

### Conservation District Level

- Locally led; prioritized resource concerns at local level
  - Soil erosion on cropland and grazing lands
  - Irrigation water conservation
  - Water quality concerns
  - Animal waste management; nutrient management
  - Eastern red cedar invasion



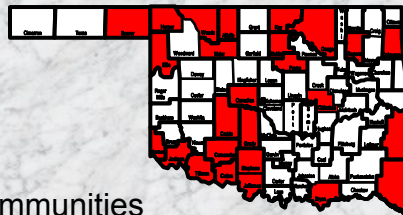
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## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP**

### Local Emphasis Areas

- Priority resource concerns identified in local areas
- Resource concerns addressed:
  - Irrigation water management
  - Model farm & ranch
  - Invasive species
  - Conservation tillage / buffers
  - Critical eroding areas
  - Animal waste mgt. (poultry)
- Tribal and under-served communities





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## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP**

### Statewide Resource Concerns

- Identified by the State Technical Committee
  - Irrigation Water Conservation (scheduling & conversion to low pressure/higher efficiency)
  - Manure Transfer (distribution of waste)
  - Lagoon Closures
  - AFO /CAFO  
(existing & expanding beef, dairy, or swine)
  - CNMP Initiative – New in 2007



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## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program - EQIP**

### Ground Water & Surface Water Conservation

- Targeted to the Ogallala aquifer in 3 panhandle counties
- Improve efficiencies of existing irrigation systems through conversion to low pressure systems and improved scheduling
- Cannot bring new land under irrigation





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**Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program  
(WHIP)**



- **Improvement and protection of wildlife habitat on private and Tribal lands**
- **Provides cost-share payments under 5- to 10-year agreements for upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic wildlife habitats**

**Conservation Security Program (CSP)**

- **It's a new day in conservation history**
- **No other program recognizes and rewards farmers for ongoing high levels of environmental stewardship**
- **CSP helps producers maintain and further their conservation commitment**





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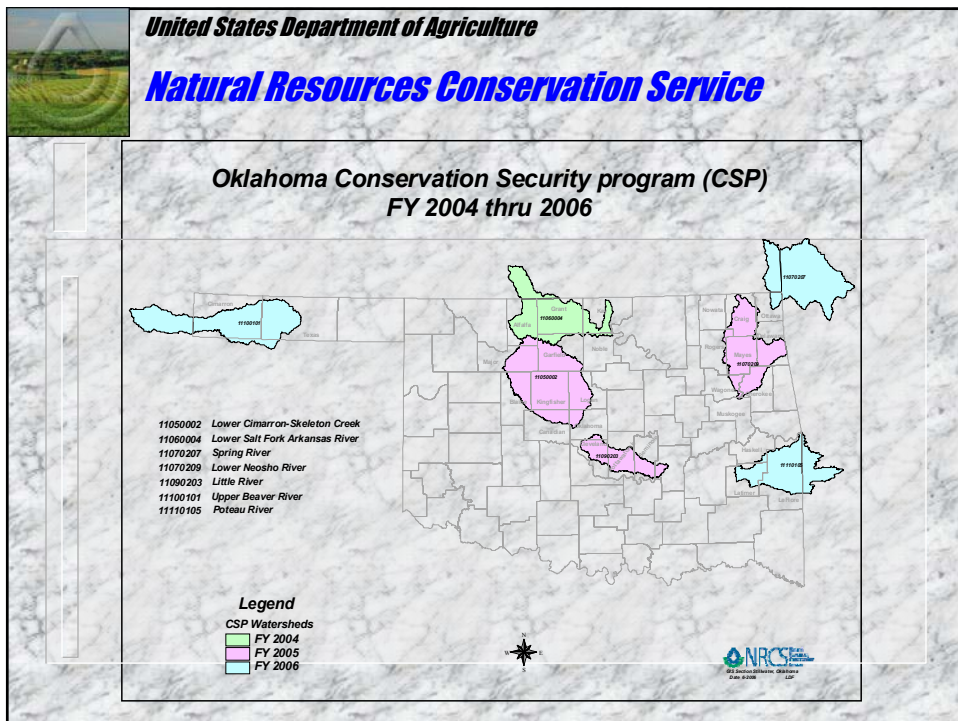
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***“CSP will reward the best and motivate the rest.”***

*USDA Secretary Ann M Veneman*




■ **By recognizing producers who are stewardship leaders and who provide the environmental benefits wanted by society, CSP provides strong incentives for others to follow their example.**





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## **Conservation Security Program**

**Sign-Ups will not be conducted in  
2007 or 2008**



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## **Conservation Easement Programs**

- **Wetlands Reserve Program**
- **Grassland Reserve Program**
- **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program**





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## **Wetland Reserve Program – WRP**

Over 67% of Oklahoma's Wetlands have been converted in the last 200 years.

1.8 million acres of an estimated 2.8 million remain



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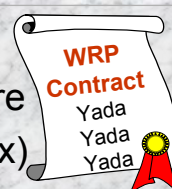
## **Wetland Reserve Program**

### ■ Easement Options:

- 30 year - 75% restoration cost-share  
75% ag value (\$1,000/ac max)
- Permanent – 100% restoration cost  
100% ag value (\$1,000/ac max)

### ■ Restoration Agreements

- 10 year - 75% restoration cost-share





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## **Wetland Reserve Program**

- Landowners control access, non-developed recreational activities, such as hunting and fishing, and the right to lease recreational uses
- FY 2007 enrollment authorizes 150,000 acres (OK – approx. 3,500 ac. / yr.)
- Goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values along with optimum wildlife habitat on every acre enrolled



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## **Wetland Reserve Program**

- **Management** - Wetlands are not always wet. Periodic and timely water level manipulations can add to the value of a wetland.
  - NRCS develops management plans to meet landowner and program objectives.
    - Some sites are intensively managed
    - Others are left to evolve naturally







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## **Red Slough WRP, McCurtain Co.**



Of the 7,500 acres  
under easement,  
roughly 4,000 acres  
are shallow water.



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## **Grassland Reserve Program**



**Voluntary program to assist  
landowners and agriculture  
operators in restoring and  
protecting grassland that  
contains forbs and shrublands.**

**Preserve the nation's most critical grassland  
resources, both native and natural grasslands, and  
shrublands**





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## **Grassland Reserve Program**

### **Enrollment options**

- **Rental Agreements**
  - **10, 15, 20 and 30 year agreements**
- **Easements**
  - **30 year and perpetual (permanent)**
- **Restoration agreements – available only on land enrolled in agreements or easements**



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## **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program**

**The purpose of the FRPP is to purchase conservation easements for the purpose of protecting topsoil by limiting nonagricultural uses of the land.**



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## **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program**

- **To be eligible, farms or ranches must be privately owned and contain:**
  - **at least 50% of prime, unique, or statewide or locally important soil, or**
  - **a historical or archaeological resource.**
- **Eligible land must be owned by landowners who certify that they do not exceed the Adjusted Gross Income limitation eligibility requirements.**
- **Subject to a pending offer.**



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## **Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program**

### **Who is eligible?**

**The 2002 Act expanded entity eligibility to include not only:**

- **State or Local Governments, and**
- **Federally Recognized Indian Tribes,**

**But also:**


- **Non-Governmental Organizations.**

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## Emergency Protection Program - EWP

 A collage of five photographs showing various EWP projects: a riverbank erosion control structure, a rocky riverbed, a stream with a large log barrier, a dirt road construction site, and a stream with a large log barrier.

Tonkawa Tribe  
Custer County  
Kickapoo Nation  
McCurain County

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## The Watershed Program

**Watershed Project Locations**



PL-566 Projects  
PL-534 Projects

NRCS has assisted communities build more than 11,000 dams in 2000 Watershed Projects in 47 States since 1948

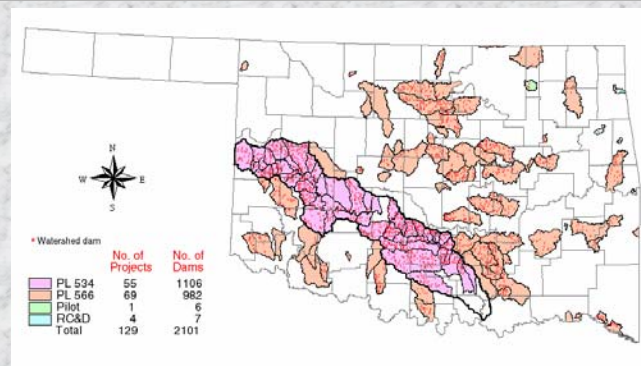




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## Oklahoma's Watershed Projects



2,101 Dams in 129 Projects



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## Nation's 1<sup>st</sup> Upstream Flood Control Dam Cloud Creek Watershed Dam No. 1



Completed July 8, 1948 in Washita County, Oklahoma

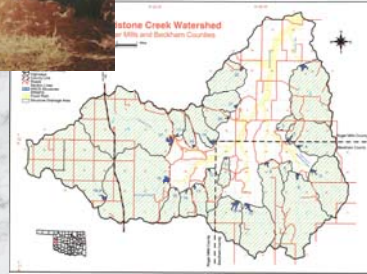


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## **Sandstone Creek Watershed**

**"The World's First Completed Upstream Flood Control Project"**



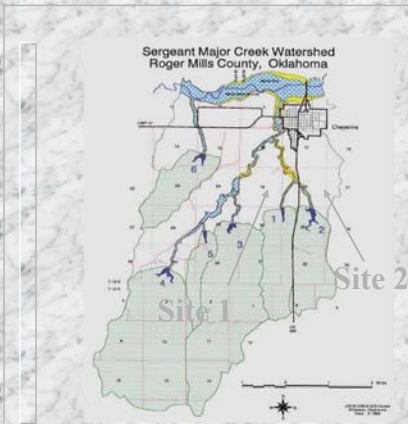
Roger Mills County



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## **Sergeant Major Creek Watershed**



**First Pilot Rehabilitation Project in the Nation - 2000**





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## **First Decommissioning of a Watershed Dam**



Cavalry Creek Watershed  
Dam No. 6  
Washita County



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## **Watershed Flood Control Dams**

“Federally- Assisted”

not

“Federally Owned”

Watershed Sponsor (entity of state government)

Is “Owner of Record”

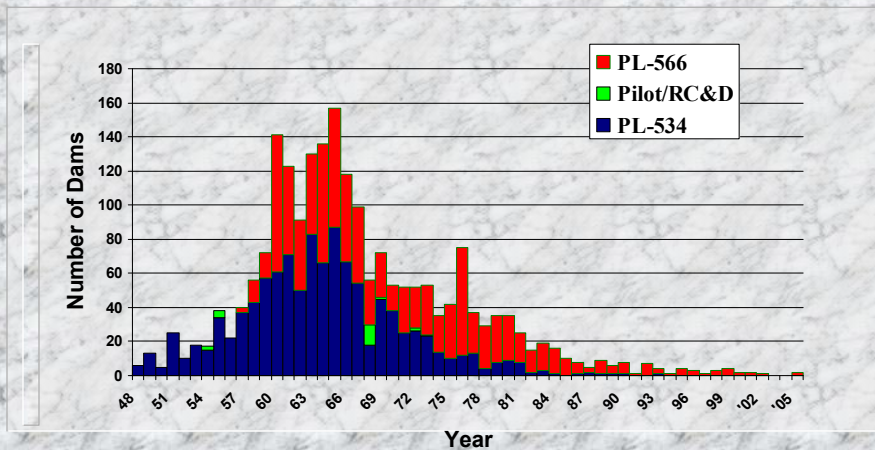




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## Dams Constructed by Year - Oklahoma

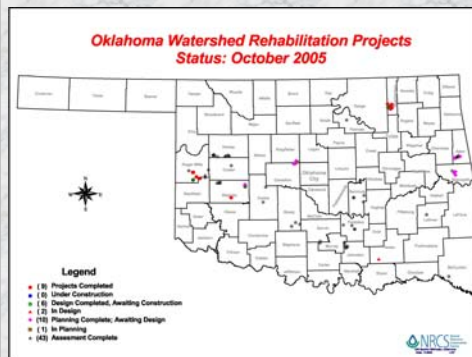


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## Okla Watershed Rehabilitation Status

28 rehabilitation projects funded to date



- \$19.7 million
- 8 completed
- 1 under construction
- 6 designed; awaiting construction
- 11 authorized & in or awaiting design
- 1 in planning

